



EAST COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD (ECCAB)

Eastern Montgomery Regional Services Center
3300 Briggs Chaney Road
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904
Tel # (240) 777-8414

Summary of ECCAB Virtual Board Meeting - Wednesday, September 3, 2021

ATTENDANCE

ECCAB Members Present (14):

- Rachael Evans
- Bill Bentley
- Sebastian Smoot
- Larry Edmonds)
- Ken Flemmer
- Fisseha Adugna,
- Samantha Blizzard,
- Raju Chebium,
- Roberta Goldberg
- Dawn Hill
- Len Newman
- Susan Price
- Kimberly Price-Evans
- Lucille Smith

Members Absent: Dawn Hill, Tamar Ruth

Guests Present:

- County Executive Marc Elrich
- Council President Tom Hucker
- Vikki Garcia (Community Outreach Specialist for Congressman John Sarbanes)
- Julio Murillo (Councilmember Tom Hucker's office)
- Agar Mbianda
- Camille McKenzie
- Eileen Finnegan
- Harriet Quinn
- Jake Adler
- Jeremiah Pope
- Mark Pharaoh
- Patricia Drumming
- Rebecca Tan
- Stephen Ashurst

Staff Present: Jewru Bandeh (Director), Linda Cooper

MEETING INITIATION

Welcome: The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: The board deferred action on the minutes until our December meeting, at which time all pending draft minutes will be reviewed for approval. The secretary will send the minutes for review to the Chair, Vice Chair and Executive Director to review prior to sending to the Board for approval.

OPERATING BUDGET FORUM RECAP

The Chair asked the board to provide recommendations on the capital and operating budgets. The following items were suggested.

- Operating Budget: The Board members were especially interested in issues related to transportation and wanted to ensure there are sufficient funds in the budget to address the following concerns:
 - The upkeep and maintenance of Transit sites, especially at the White Oak, Tech Road Park and Ride and Briggs Chaney Transit Centers
 - Expanded bus frequency and coverage in East County, to include White Oak Recreation Center, Adventist Hospital, Blake High School and MD 198 where service is insufficient or nonexistent. Some of these issues will be discussed further by the Board and with MCDOT representatives
 - Insufficient Staff in the Regional Service Center to address workload issues and the needs of East County residents. The County Executive agreed this is an important investment and indicated he is taking steps to address it
 - The desire by the Board to have increased data related to ridership on Flash, Metro Bus and Ride On. These are issues the Board will discuss with MCDOT at a future Board meeting
- - Operating Budget/Ride on Service:
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- Capital Budget / Transportation:
 - In addition to the Operating Budget related to Transportation, the Board was also concerned about the Capital Budget related to this issue, the following topics were highlighted:
 - The status of the US 29 Managed Lane Project
 - A study to extend bus lanes on US 29 south of New Hampshire. MCDOT will host a meeting on November 16,2021 to provide an update on the US 29 busway study. Jewru Bandeh will share the invite this week
 - The Bus Rapid Transit: System Development. The County will start the study for New Hampshire Avenue BRT next year. There is no scheduled start date for study or design of Randolph Road BRT.
 - The Burtonsville Access Road
 - After considered discussion of the Capital projects, no Board action was taken

PRESENTATIONS BY SPECIAL GUESTS

Council President Tom Huckler provided the following information:

- On October 26, he and others took Adrienne Jones, Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates, for a tour of the Burtonsville Park and Ride. They were joined by Delegates Luedtke, Queen, and Korman, and MCDOT Director Conklin. The state has committed \$8 million to support construction of a multi-level garage, in hopes of spurring development in Burtonsville.
 - The Board was interested in knowing if the County Council plans to invest County CIP dollars in the parking garage or if the County plans for the State to fully fund the garage. Council President Huckler expressed his interest in seeing the State provide all of the funds necessary to complete the project. Absent this funding, he indicated an interest in having the County provide sufficient funds to ensure the garage is built.
- County Council extended the emergency cap on rent increases until May 15, 2022 ([Bill 30-21](#)).
- County Council Updated the prevailing wage requirements so that contractors on County-funded projects must pay a living wage to their workers ([Bill 35-21](#)). The goal is to incentivize contractors to hire workers locally, as opposed to using low-wage workers from other states.
- New law requiring the police department to provide body camera footage to County Council within a short number of days ([Bill 45-20](#))

County Executive Marc Elrich provided the following information:

- Establishing a Montgomery College campus in East County has been a priority since he first took office. Montgomery College is considering three options:
 - Use space within vacant commercial property as an interim campus.
 - Purchase existing buildings
 - Acquire land to build a new campus
- For some time, The White Oak Town Center and Hillandale Gateway development projects were “stuck” in planning review. Chief Executive Elrich intervened to get the projects back on track.
- The county issued a request for proposals (RFP) for the Burtonsville Park and Ride. The RFP respondents proposed building residential units on the site, in addition to structured commuter parking for the Park & Ride. No retail or office uses were included in the proposals. County Executive Elrich would like a grocery store either at the county’s Park and Ride property or on the Burtonsville Crossing property (owned by EDENS).
- Establishing a Food Consortium at the CHI Building on New Hampshire Ave in White Oak. This will be a state-of-the-art “Maker Space” incubator to help address food insecurity.
- County Executive Elrich is reconstructing the Workforce Montgomery office to provide better outreach and job search/placement assistance services in East County.
- MCDOT is considering extending the bus lanes on US 29 south of Tech Road. County Executive Elrich would like to extend the dedicated bus lanes to provide “true” rapid transit. He is discussing with Howard County to extend bus service to Fulton, Columbia, and possibly as far north as Ellicott City.
- County Executive Elrich is speaking with MCPS and M-NCPPC to consider options for addressing Burtonsville Elementary overcapacity issues. One option considers building a school on Park property near the Burtonsville Library and Recreation Center. Another option is to build a school in the Bentley Park community, on vacant land that was set aside for a new school. The new school could also alleviate overcrowding at Greencastle Elementary.

- Mark Pharaoh notes that the East County Recreation Center is closed for activities because of the County's vaccination site, even though few people are getting vaccines. Mark asks if the vaccination area can be limited to a smaller portion of the building so that the Recreation Center can be reopened for activities. Elrich replies that he will evaluate this week.
- Samantha Blizzard asks if there have been any updates on Viva White Oak. Elrich replies there have not been any updates recently.
- Sebastian Smoot asked about discussions with Howard County to extend bus service on 29: the conversations have been ongoing for years, why is it taking so long to move forward? Elrich notes that the Howard County Executive needs to request assistance from the State, and he will continue to encourage Howard County to make progress.
- Raju Chebium notes that Howard County already has MTA commuter buses, but these do not appear to have alleviated congestion caused by commuters from Howard County. How would extension of bus rapid transit help? Elrich replies that the commuter buses do not operate frequently, and they get stuck in traffic, making them unattractive for commuters.
- Rachael Evans asks if MC has announced a location for their East County campus. Elrich replies that MC is still evaluating locations but has not announced a decision.
- Jewru Bandeh notes 300+ rental housing development is planned near the Home Depot
- Len Newman asks about providing more reliable transportation for East County residents to west county (Rockville, White Flint, Bethesda) and into Virginia. Elrich notes that the ICC provides a route to the I-270 corridor; The Maryland State Department of Transportation is proposing increasing capacity on 270, 495, and the American Legion Bridge. Elrich suggests that investments in transit service (BRT and rail) can provide cheaper and more reliable options for commuters, but that there is currently no funding for implementing these projects.
- Mark Pharaoh notes that some recreation centers are being used as homeless shelters. Can the residents be relocated so that the community can have access to the recreation center programs? Elrich notes that the County is planning a new state-of-the-art homeless shelter. The new center would have medical, counseling, and job services to help residents get back on their feet.
- Kimberly Price-Evans asks about the distribution of pediatric vaccines. Elrich replies that the State has allocated 13,000 of the 40,000 vaccines for Montgomery County to the County's Department of Health and Human Services, with the remainder going to private providers. The County plans to focus its vaccination efforts in Title I schools, to provide greater access to lower-income families.
- Roberta Goldberg asks about pre-kindergarten funding. Elrich notes that the County is providing \$5 million per year to support private providers of early childhood education and hopes to continue funding into the future. He added that the federal government may provide additional funding as part of the "Build Back Better" package.
- Elrich notes that the CIP continues to allocate \$40 million in the budget to support implementation of the Viva White Oak project,

NEW BUSINESS

County Redistricting

The board reviewed the map proposed by the Commission on Redistricting, which was submitted to the County Council earlier this week. Due to the requirement to have the seven districts of roughly equal population (151,000 ±10%), if East County is to be contained within a single district, the district would need to include neighborhoods outside of East County. In the commission's proposed map, East County is located entirely within District 5. District 5 also includes the following communities that are not traditionally considered part of "East County": Four Corners, Kemp Mill, Layhill, Leisure World,

and Bel Pre.

Sebastian moved that the Board draft a letter to the County Council regarding the Map. The draft letter would not explicitly support the commission's proposed map, but rather support the map's intent of providing East County with its own district. The motion was seconded and passed without objections.

The draft letter will be presented at the December ECCAB meeting to provide an opportunity for the board or members of the community to provide r comments to the letter.

UPDATES FROM COUNTY OFFICIALS

None.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

All Board business being complete, the adjourned at 9:29 p.m.